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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 042951
R 162026Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3068
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 20929

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, UR, PARM, FR
SUBJECT: ELYSEE ON FRANCO-SOVIET NUCLEAR ACCORD AND
SAUVAGNARGUES' MOSCOW VISIT

REF: (A) PARIS 20472, (B) PARIS 20115, (C) PARIS 19793,
(D) MOSCOW 11184

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: CONTRARY TO OTHER ACCOUNTS, ELYSEE SOURCE SUGGESTS GISCARD MAY HAVE GIVEN SOVIETS NO WARNING OF HIS INTENTION TO ANNOUNCE ACCIDENTAL USE ACCORD. RESULT WAS SOME FURTHER IRRITATION, SUBSEQUENTLY PATCHED UP WITH GROMYKO. SOURCE ADDS THAT FRENCH HAVE "NO INTENTION GO FURTHER IN NUCLEAR DIALOGUE WITH MOSCOW." END SUMMARY.

2. ELYSEE INTERNATIONAL STAFF MEMBER HAS GIVEN US, IN STRICT CONFIDENCE, FOLLOWING MORE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF GISCARD'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ACCIDENTAL USE ACCORD DURING LUNCH FOR FRANCO-SOVIET MIXED COMMISSION.

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3. ELYSEE SOURCE EXPLICITLY CONFIRMS THAT GISCARD DE-

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CIDED TO MAKE HIS UNILATERAL ANNOUNCEMENT AFTER IT BECAME CLEAR (A) THAT KOSYGIN WOULD NOT COME TO PARIS TO MARK 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF DE GAULLE'S MOSCOW TRIP AND (B) THAT OTHER EFFORTS TO MARK THIS OCCASION AS SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL EVENT HAD FAILED. SYMPTOMATIC OF SITUATION WAS FACT THAT EVEN ACCIDENTAL USE AGREEMENT ITSELF WAS NOT COMPLETELY FINISHED IN TIME FOR THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY MIXED COMMISSION MEETING PRESUMABLY TO PREVENT GOF FROM EXPLOITING IT POLITICALLY. INDEED, SOURCE SAYS REMAINING TECHNICAL POINTS HAVE ONLY BEEN RESOLVED IN RECENT DAYS.

4. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, GISCARD'S REASONS FOR MAKING HIS ANNOUNCEMENT WERE THREEFOLD: FIRST, GISCARD DID NOT WANT SOVIETS TO HAVE THE BENEFITS OF THE ACCIDENTAL USE AGREEMENT, WHICH THEY HAD ASKED FOR, WHILE WEICHING ON THE POIITICAL PRICE IN THE AREA OF FRANCO-SOVIET ATMOS-PHERICS. SECONDLY, A PROMINENT ANNOUNCEMENT, EVEN UNI-LATERALLY, WOULD SHOW THE FRENCH PUBLIC THAT SOVIETS DO TAKE FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCES SERIOUSLY, WHILE REINFORCING GENERAL MERY'S ARGUMENT AS TO WHO FRANCE'S PRINCIPAL ADVERSARY IS. THIRDLY, ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD HELP DEFUSE FRENCH DOMESTIC CRITICISM OF GISCARD'S ATLANTIC TENDEN-CIES, BY SHOWING THAT HE CAN ALSO DEAL WITH SOVIET SIDE. ACCORDING ELYSEE SOURCE, AN ADDITIONAL REASON WHY GISCARD WANTED TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS AGREEMENT WAS THAT FRANCE "HAD NO INTENTION TO GO ANY FURTHER IN A BILATERAL NUCLEAR DIALOGUE WITH THE SOVIET UNION."

5. AS TO THE MANNER IN WHICH THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS ACTUALLY MADE, SOURCE INSISTS THAT, CONTRARY TO WHAT WE WERE TOLD AT THE QUAI (REF C), GISCARD GAVE SOVIET MIXED COMMISSION DELEGATION NO WARNING WHATSOEVER. (IF THIS IS SO, CIRCULATING STORY THAT SOVIETS WERE TOLD A DAY OR SO AHEAD OF TIME MAY BE FIGLEAF TO SPARE THEM EMBARRASSMENT.) AS A RESULT, SOURCE SAYS SOVIET DELEGA-TION AT ELYSEE LUNCH WERE "A LITTLE SHOCKED" -- A FACT WHICH WOULD HELP EXPLAIN REPORTS THAT KIRILLIN WAS INAR-TICULATE AND MADE NO RECIPROCAL REFERENCE TO THE ACCORD WHATEVER. SUBSEQUENTLY, SOURCE SAYS, THERE WERE "SOME FURTHER BAD MOMENTS" RESULTING IN GENERALLY "POOR HUMOR"
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DURING REST OF SOVIET DELEGATION'S VISIT. SINCE THEN HOWEVER, GROMYKO HAS SEEN NEW FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW AND TOLD FRENCH THAT HE "FULLY APPROVED" OF GISCARD'S STATEMENT, WHICH ACCORDS WITH SOVIET UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION. THE RESULT WAS AGREEMENT TO SAUVAGNAR-GUES' TRIP TO FINALIZE THE DEAL.

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6. OTHERWISE ELYSEE SOURCE CONFIRMS QUAI'S EXPECTATIONS OF SAUVAGNARGUES' TRIP REPORTED REF A, INCLUDING VAGUE REFERENCE TO "POSSIBILITY" SAUVAGNARGUES MIGHT DISCUSS BREZHNEV TRIP TO FRANCE "IF SOVIETS RAISE IT."

7. AS FURTHER FOOTNOTE WE MIGHT NOTE THAT LE MONDE, JULY 16, ADDRESSES ITSELF TO PRESENT PHASE FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS UNDER UNUSUALLY FRANK HEADLINE: "SAUVAGNARGUES HOPES TO REMOVE CERTAIN AMBIGUITIES IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS DURING MOSCOW VISIT." TEXT OF ARTICLE REPORTS THAT, IN ADDITION TO EXCHANGE OF LETTERS FORMALIZING ACCIDENTAL USE ACCORD, WHICH WOULD NOT HAVE REQUIRED THE FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER TO GO TO MOSCOW, SAUVAGNARGUES TRIP WILL PERMIT HIM TO MAKE "CERTAIN EXPLANATIONS AND PERHAPS TO REMOVE AMBIGUITIES" WHICH HAVE ARISEN. ARTICIE ALSO NOTES THAT PODGORNY, ON OCCASION OF PRESENT-ATION OF CREDENTIALS OF NEW FRENCH AMBASSADOR DE LEUSSE, UNDERSCORED FRANCO-SOVIET COOPERATION IN TRADITIONAL WARM TERMS (MOSCOW REF D) AND UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF MEETINGS AT THE "HIGHEST LEVELS" -- PERHAPS A HINT THAT, AFTER THE DUST HAS SETTLED, BREZHNEV WILL COME TO PARIS AFTER ALL.

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8. COMMENT: WHETHER OR NOT SOVIETS HAD SLIGHT WARNING OF GISCARD'S UNILATERAL ANNOUNCEMENT, RECENT WEEKS MUST HAVE BEEN UNCOMFORTABLE PERIOD FOR BOTH SIDES. BY MAKING HIS ANNOUNCEMENT, GISCARD RETAINED INITIATIVE AND SHOWED, INTER ALIA, THAT HE WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY SOVIET ATMOSPHERIC TACTICS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS BOLD MOVE MAY HAVE PERSUADED KREMLIN THAT TIFFING WITH FRENCH SHOULD NOT GO TO LIMIT OF ENDANGERING THE RELATION-SHIP, AND THAT PODGORNY'S REMARKS, AS WELL AS ATMOSPHERE ON JULY 14 REPORTED IN REF D, REFLECT DECISION TO RESTORE CONSTRUCTIVE BALANCE, INCLUDING CONCEIVABLE AGREEMENT TO A BREZHNEV VISIT. FROM FRENCH DOMESTIC VIEWPOINT GISCARD'S UNILATERAL MOVE HAS ALSO IMPROVED HIS APPEARANCE AS LEADER IN THIS FIELD, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS NOT TO EXTENT ELYSEE MIGHT HAVE WISHED.
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